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The State of Illinois plan to improve public school services to gifted children was described. In the period from 1959 to 1963, a special study project was operated with State support. It assisted the General Assembly in determining whether legislation was needed and assisted the school districts in providing for gifted children. A series of principles for State action and a series of tentative recommendations were formulated: (1) Gifted children exist within all levels of society, within all racial and ethnic groups, and in every kind of home. (2) A State plan must take into account the ways in which innovation occurs in schools. (3) The General Assembly should delegate major responsibility for the operation of schools to the local boards of education, which would assist and encourage local school districts. (4) Study and experimentation should continue with State support so that improvement may be continuous and responsive to new scientific findings.

The governor of Illinois sponsored conferences on Developing the Talents of All Illinois Youth, made provision in his budget for funds needed to implement the State plan, and recommended enactment of the program.

The School Problems Commission was effective in seeking and examining evidence in the area of gifted children, and in securing favorable legislative action on a comprehensive State plan to meet some of the major problems.

Reimbursement to school districts was appropriated at $4 million. Reimbursement is provided for any district which submits an approved plan for improving the district's services to gifted children.

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A STATE PLAN TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL SERVICES TO GIFTED CHILDREN

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At present, the State of Illinois is deeply committed to a large-scale effort to improve the services of the public schools to the gifted segment of the school population. This total effort includes State reimbursement for psychologists to help identify gifted children and for other personnel to work in special programs in school districts, State support for books and materials, demonstration programs in schools in various parts of the State, experimental projects to help develop new practical approaches to the education of the gifted, a small State staff and State support of special training programs, such as fellowships and summer institutes, to increase the number of specially trained personnel to serve in special programs for the gifted. The several parts of this total effort are being implemented for the first time during the present (1963-65) biennium, with a total State appropriation of $6,750,000. A request is being made to the School Problems Commission and to the current General Assembly to continue this State plan in the coming biennium (1965-67) with State funds in the amount of $8,450,000.

It is the purpose of this paper to describe this State plan in a broad context, including:

1. The background of study and planning on which the plan is based, with particular reference to the role of the School Problems Commission and the Governor of Illinois,
2. The present status of the plan, and
3. The need for critical examination of the plan as soon as is feasible.

The Background of Study and Planning

In the period from 1959 to 1963, a special study project was operated with State support. The project was charged with basic responsibility for assisting the General Assembly to determine whether legislation was needed and desired to help school districts provide for gifted children. Among the activities carried on by the special study project were: (1) a preliminary survey of provisions for gifted children in public schools during the 1959-60 school year; (2) preparation by a competent scholar of an analysis of previous research on the education of gifted children; (3) support of studies of a variety of important topics related to programs for gifted children in local school districts. Forty-four such studies were conducted during two school years, 1960-61 and 1961-62; (4) preparation of a policy statement which defines the term "gifted children" and makes recommendations for program evaluation. More than 30,000 copies of the policy statement "Education for the Gifted Pupils in Illinois Schools"[1] were distributed in Illinois.

All of the above activities contributed to the formulation of a series of principles for State action and a series of tentative recommendations. These

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recommendations and the basic reationale for them were prepared by the Advisory Committee of the Special Study Project for Gifted Children, a broadly representative group of 17 educational leaders, assisted by the Project staff. The four principles for State action were stated as follows[2]:

> Principle I. Gifted children exist within all levels of society, within all racial and ethnic groups, and they come from every kind of home. Any programs to develop their talents must be concerned with their diversity. Among the differences which vitally affect program development are the differences between elementary and secondary schools, between rural and urban settings, and between gifted children whose school achievement is high and those whose achievement is low.
>
> Principle II. A State plan must take into account the ways in which innovation occurs in schools. Brickell's study of innovation in the schools of New York State indicates that journal articles, convention speeches, and research reports are less influential in fostering change than is the on-site visit by the practitioner to a school in which the change has been programmed and put into operation.
>
> Principle III. The General Assembly has delegated major responsibility for the operation of schools to local boards of education. In recommending State actions we do not intend to displace or discourage local initiative. We would like to expand the range of possibilities open to local districts in providing for their gifted children. As Governor Kerner has said, the State has a great responsibility in this area. We believe the State can best discharge its responsibility through assisting and encouraging local school districts.
>
> Principle IV. Research on gifted children has gone forward for more than forty years. We now know more than enough to support extensive and more adequate programs for gifted children. Yet our current knowledge and our current best efforts are sure to be modified as research in this area continues at an accelerated pace. Thus State action, while necessary, must be flexible and must not establish rigid formulas and detailed prescriptions. Study and experimentation should continue with State support so that improvement may be continuous and responsive to new scientific findings.

The Role of the Governor

Prior to the final formulation of the recommendations and their formal submission to the Governor and General Assembly by December 1, 1962, as required by law, the Advisory Committee and the Project staff wished to submit the tentative recommendations to as many citizens of Illinois as possible for critical reaction. George T. Wilkins, Superintendent of Public Instruction, asked Governor Otto Kerner to serve as chief sponsor of a series of Governor's Conferences on Developing the Talents of All Illinois Youth at which the recommendations were presented to leaders of educational, civic, professional, labor, industrial, and social service groups. Governor Kerner gave the keynote address at the conferences at the University of Chicago and in the State Capitol. The keynote address was delivered by Lt. Governor Samuel Shapiro at the conferences at Southern Illinois University, Eastern Illinois University, and

Rock Island Senior High School. Attendance at the five Conferences was 1,300. The criticisms and suggestions of the participants were extremely useful in the further refinement of the plans for State action.

These plans in the form of the final report of the Special Study Project for Gifted Children[3] were presented to Governor Kerner at a luncheon held early in January 1963. To this luncheon the Governor invited the other State officers, the President of the University of Illinois, the members of the Advisory Committee of the Special Study Project for Gifted Children, and the members of the Illinois School Problems Commission. The discussion at this meeting of next steps in implementing the recommendations for State action was led by Senator Edward Eberspacher, Chairman of the School Problems Commission. Members of both Houses of the Seventh-Third General Assembly participated in the discussion and the suggestion was made that the recommendations be presented to the Illinois Senate as a Committee of the whole.

Governor Kerner included the funds needed to implement the State plan in his budget for the 1963-65 biennium. He specifically recommended enactment of the program in his budget message given in April 1963.

At a press conference held in his office the Governor announced Federal support from the Cooperative Research Branch, U. S. Office of Education, to the University of Illinois for the University High School Demonstration Project for Gifted Youth. This project was launched at a statewide conference held at the University of Illinois on April 18, 1963. Governor Kerner presented the keynote address at this conference which initiated the participation of curriculum projects at University High School in establishing demonstration programs for gifted youth in Danville, East St. Louis, Edwardsville, Elk Grove, Marion, Metropolis, Roxana, Springfield, and Sterling.

Governor Kerner has been very generous in the time he has devoted to critical examination of the proposals, in the efforts he has made to inform Illinois citizens of the nature of these proposals, and in the active support which he has given both to the legislation which established the State plan and to the actions of Ray Page and his staff in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in implementing the State plan.

The Role of the School Problems Commission

The operation of the Illinois School Problems Commission has been described as an innovation in educational decision-making at the State level.[4] The actions of the Commission with respect to the need for more adequate attention to the gifted segment of the school population merit this description. No other agency could have been as effective both in seeking and examining evidence in this problem area and in securing favorable legislative action on a comprehensive State plan to meet some of the major problems.

The original impetus for the Special Study Project for Gifted Children came from a hearing of the Commission on March 20, 1958. At this hearing seven or eight diverse points of view were presented by a school board member, school administrators, and a university professor. In view of this diversity, the Commission decided to recommend the implementation of one of the recommendations that a special study be conducted to help determine an appropriate plan of action for the State.

The Commission recommended an appropriation of $150,000 to support the Special Study Project in the 1959-61 biennium, and in order to complete the work of the Project they recommended a second $150,000 appropriation for the 1961-63 biennium.

When the reports of study projects in school districts, colleges, and universities were analyzed in the summer of 1962 and when the suggestions which had come from the Governor's Conferences were considered, the Project staff presented the recommendations for State action to the School Problems Commission at a hearing in September 1962. In the process of considering these recommendations, the Commission examined projections of the composition of the American Labor Force as prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor. These projections indicate highly significant changes which are taking place in the three occupational categories with the highest educational requirements for entry. Persons employed in the professional and technical fields are expected to make 12 percent of the total labor force by 1970 compared to 7.9 percent in 1940--an increase in this category of more than 50 percent. The Commission also studied selected findings of the Illinois Dropout Study and the Quincy Study of Motivations of Youth for Leaving School. These studies, completed in 1962, show that only seven of the top 20 in 100 in academic ability of the general school population were completing the bachelor's degree.

Following the hearing in September and a second hearing in December, the School Problems Commission agreed to recommend the proposed State plan as described in the next section of this paper. A bill to implement the plan was introduced by Senator Eberspacher on behalf of the Commission on April 18, 1963. The bill was immediately advanced to second reading without reference to a committee, and it was presented to Senate as a committee of the whole on May 1. On May 7 the bill was passed by the Senate by a 51-0 vote and sent to the House, where it passed by a 163-0 vote on June 4.

The Present Status of the Plan

Reimbursement Program. The largest amount within the total appropriation for 1963-65 was $4 million for reimbursement to school districts. Reimbursement is provided for any district which submits an approved plan for improving the district's services to gifted children. The amount of reimbursement is computed either by: (1) a formula which takes into account the number of pupils in special programs and the comparative wealth of the district or (2) the personnel method which allows $5,000 in reimbursement for each full-time specialist. Specialists provide diagnostic counseling and consultative services, and their formal education and experience must meet appropriate standards, including the master's degree or equivalent. The first type of reimbursement provides an average of about $40 per pupil, and the number of pupils in a program for which formula reimbursement is claimed may not exceed ten percent of the pupils in average daily attendance in the district.

The assumption which underlies the reimbursement program is that school district budgets do not provide sufficient flexibility to permit substantial program improvements for a subgroup of the school population such as the gifted, unless these budgets are augmented. In administering the reimbursement program, the staff of the Department of Program Development for Gifted Children in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has encouraged the

submission of school district plans in which the major decisions about what action to take to develop more adequate programs for the gifted are made by the professional staff of the district. The material which follows is taken from summaries of 111 district plans submitted for 1964-65. Locations are shown on the map on the following page.

As would be expected in a program which depends upon local district initiative, there is considerable diversity in the features which are being emphasized in local school districts. The public schools of Chicago show the greatest diversity, with programs of many kinds and descriptions, intended to provide better attention to individual differences.

Illinois Plan for Gifted Children

REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAMS

1964-1965

Table 1 contains program categories from 26 secondary school programs with a school or school district enrollment range of 246 to 8,276.

Table 1--Secondary School Programs Listed in Ascending Order of School Enrollments

School Enrollment	Program Category
246	Special English program; in-service training
417	Accelerated reading; writing and theme preparation
417	Special sections of chemistry and physics
731	Accelerated 12th grade American problems and bookkeeping
770	Special English program
780	Advanced courses in social studies, science, mathematics, foreign language
878	Counseling program
955	Special classes in English, mathematics, chemistry, Spanish
992	Special classes in English, mathematics, history, French, humanities, painting
1,058	Curriculum development by ten staff teams
1,380	Accelerated English, social studies, mathematics, science foreign language, art
1,466	Counseling program
1,521	Special reading program, team teaching in U. S. History, chemistry, mathematics, English
1,679	Improved guidance and special classes
1,917	Program in early stage of development
2,052	Special accelerated courses and advanced placement; fine arts
2,342	Special classes in mathematics, science, and foreign language
2,356	Accelerated courses in mathematics, social studies, science, English, and foreign language
2,575	Special classes in English, U. S. History and mathematics
2,806	Special classes in English, mathematics, and science
4,008	Special classes in English, mathematics, science, and social studies; advanced placement
4,649	Special classes in English, mathematics, and social studies
4,758	Special classes in English, mathematics, science, economics, foreign language
5,500	Fifteen special classes in grades 7-12
7,179	Special classes in American literature, public speaking, contemporary history, and humanities
8,276	Special classes in several subjects

Information about elementary and junior high school programs is summarized in Table 2. Programs of 54 districts ranging in enrollment from 155 to 8,921

are reflected in Table 2. In the group of smaller districts, two programs are related to the University of Illinois television program for the gifted and two others are related to the program of assistance being offered by one of the demonstration centers.

Table 2--Elementary and Junior High School Programs

	Number of Schools	
	Enrollments under 1,000	Enrollments over 1,000
Grades 1-3	10	26
Grades 4-6	14	29
Grades 7-8	14	29
Program emphases:		
In-service education	4	11
Improved materials	4	10
English, language arts, reading	7	17
Social studies	3	7
Mathematics	3	10
Science	3	7
Number of districts	18	36
Range in enrollments	155-932	1,022-8,921

An examination of the program summaries from 30 unit districts shows that the kinds of programs and program emphases are similar to those of secondary schools and elementary schools listed in Tables 1 and 2 above. Special classes in English are most commonly followed by mathematics, science, and social studies. A considerable number of district plans include improvement of instructional materials and attention to in-service training of teachers. Three unit district plans include a nongraded primary program.

Demonstration Centers

In his report "Organizing New York State for Educational Change," H. M. Brickell says:[5]

> "The most effective way to convince a school staff that it should adopt a new program is to let it observe the successful new program in action. Nothing persuades like a visit. Written descriptions of the new program, speeches about it and research reports concerning it should all be regarded as preliminary or supplementary to a visit.
>
> "The innovation must be demonstrated under conditions which are not abnormal, artificial or unrealistic--that is, not too different from the everyday circumstances in the observer's own school and community."

This point of view is fundamental to the demonstration center part of the State plan. The purpose of the demonstration centers was described in the initial plans for 1963-65 as follows:[6]

> "The major purpose of the demonstration centers is to provide for all Illinois educators and other citizens convincing and readily accessible demonstrations in operating situations of a number of particular approaches to the education of gifted children.
>
> "Description: Demonstration centers exemplify the following approaches:
>
> 1. Acceleration of highly gifted pupils.
>
> 2. Individualized instruction through such means as team teaching, nongraded plans, independent study.
>
> 3. Special classes for the highly gifted, with specially trained teachers and supervisors or consultants.
>
> 4. Special attention to gifted youth among socially and culturally underprivileged groups.
>
> 5. Curriculum improvement through programs which emphasize higher-level thought processes, creativity, divergent thinking.
>
> 6. Special attention to the emotional and social adjustment of gifted pupils."

During the first biennium of operation, 27 demonstration centers have been established. Their locations are shown on the map which follows.

For some categories, such as curriculum improvement and special classes, an adequate number of demonstration centers has been designated. For other categories, such as programs to assist socially and emotionally maladjusted gifted children and programs to give special attention to discovering the talents of children of the lower socioeconomic groups, racial and ethnic minority groups, additional centers are needed. It is likely that a substantial amount of experimentation will be necessary before more demonstration programs in these categories can be designated.

The demonstration centers represent the largest and most ambitious attempt to date to apply the demonstration concept in the field of education. A number of significant problems have been encountered in the process in establishing and operating the demonstration centers. These problems relate to (1) the role of the demonstration center director, (2) the responsibility of the demonstration center to assist other school systems, (3) the use of national curriculum projects as models for program development for the gifted, and (4) the special problems involved in attempting to evaluate programs for the gifted. These problems have provided the focus for a series of monthly meetings of the demonstration center directors. During the current school year meetings have been held in Champaign-Urbana, Edwardsville, Quincy, Elk Grove, Springfield, Chicago, and Marion. Plans call for additional meetings in Aurora and Champaign-Urbana. Each meeting begins

Illinois Program for Gifted Children

DEMONSTRATION CENTERS

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with visits by the directors to the demonstration programs in the immediate area. The meetings have been planned by the directors as a means of in-service education for themselves as they seek to define their own roles and develop the functions of the demonstration center as a change agent in education.

Experimental Projects

Not only is it intended that the demonstration centers should be free to change as the results of experience and program evaluation indicate, but it also is assumed that some new programs developed experimentally will prove to be so valuable that they should form the basis for new demonstration centers. The various parts of the State plan are intended to be consistent with a total process of educational research and development which begins with basic investigations of the type carried on in universities and moves through experimental field testing to eventual widespread dissemination. The dissemination process is seen as including both demonstration programs and in-service training to prepare professional staff members to use new skills and knowledge. Thus, in the State plan the experimental projects are seen as a kind of field testing; and the demonstration centers and in-service parts of the State plan are seen as contributing to eventual changes in practice in a large number of schools. These might be supported by State reimbursement or by some other form of State support.

Sixteen experimental projects, supported largely by State funds during the current biennium, are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. List of Experimental Projects

Place	Topic	Level	Direction: University Faculty	Direction: School District Faculty
Mahomet	Measurement of abilities	HS		X
Champaign	Curriculum for socially and culturally underprivileged	Elem		X
Peoria - Bradley University	Program evaluation	Elem	X	X
Elk Grove	Early identification	Elem		X
Berwyn - J.S. Morton High School	Linguistics	HS		X
University of Illinois	Televised enrichment units	Elem	X	
Illinois State University	Curriculum and materials development	Elem	X	
Chicago	In-service work for encouraging teachers to foster creativity	Elem		X
University of Chicago Laboratory Schools	Independent study	Elem & JH		X
Norridge	Curriculum development in science			
	Curriculum development in humanities	HS		X
Cicero - J.S. Morton High School	Vocabulary development	HS		X
Northern Illinois University	Art and creative performance	HS	X	
Evanston	In-service work and materials development for nongraded elementary school	Elem		X
University of Illinois	Effect of a special school	HS	X	
Decatur-Washington School	Curriculum for socially and culturally underprivileged	Elem		X

Programs to Increase the Number of Specially Trained Personnel

In a report to the School Problems Commission on October 14, 1964, Mr. Wayne Newlin, Director, Program Development for Gifted Children, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, gave the following summary statement concerning training programs:

> "During the 1963-1964 academic year and the summer of 1964, approximately 900 teachers, supervisors, counselors, and certain other specialized personnel were enrolled in institutes throughout the State. In cooperation with local school districts and universities of the State, the Superintendent of Public Instruction established a total of 27 institutes of which 13 were of the in-service type and 14 were summer institutes. In addition, two academic year institutes are being conducted during the current 1964-1965 school term.
>
> "Four universities in the State are cooperating in the program of fellowships for qualified people who are preparing themselves to work in programs for gifted children in the State of Illinois. Thirteen Fellows have been approved and are now officially enrolled as full-time graduate students for the 1964-1965 academic year.
>
> "Individual participants, as well as their school administrators, have expressed great satisfaction with these training programs."

One example should serve to illustrate the concern which characterizes these efforts to develop models for in-service training which are more effective in changing teacher behavior in the classroom than is the typical model of formal courses. Following are the four distinctive features of the instructional program for the 1964 summer institute at the University of Illinois in which 100 demonstration teachers and supervisors participated:

a. Detailed analysis of each teacher's <u>expectations</u> of a pupil, accomplished by a study of each teacher's lesson plans, examinations, tape recordings of class discussions, and materials;

b. <u>Models</u> of new teaching behavior, achieved through regular observation of demonstration classes, films, examination of new materials, and creative work of the teachers involved;

c. <u>Practice</u> of new models under observation of staff and colleagues, using the new materials and new methods of teaching the materials;

d. <u>Follow-up procedures</u> during the year, whereby the interaction evolved during the summer institute can be continued during the year.

The Need for Further Study

At the time when the five parts of the State plan were recommended to the School Problems Commission and the General Assembly, it was pointed out that the total plan should be examined critically as soon as it had been in operation

long enough for evaluative studies to be made. It was estimated that, if the total plan were operated for three biennia, 1963-69, this would provide an adequate period for the establishment of the new programs a period of operation and time for collection of data on their effectiveness. Toward the end of the 1965-67 biennium, studies to answer such questions as the following should be made:

1. Will a categorical form of support, such as partial reimbursement to school districts for services and materials, continue to be necessary or will the future program of general State assistance to school districts be adequate to support the desired level of services to the gifted segment of the school population?

2. Is the combination of experimentation and demonstration supported by in-service training effective in fostering change in the schools?

3. What consultative services related to the education of gifted children should be provided at the State level in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction? What forms of intermediate district organization and local school organization are optimal to support program development for gifted children?

4. Is it necessary to continue special fellowships for graduate study and special in-service and summer academic year institutes to increase the number of specially trained personnel or will the regular undergraduate and graduate programs of teacher preparation and the regular provisions of in-service programs by school districts be adequate?

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